

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TUNIS 03703 191212Z

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SNM-02 TRSE-00 L-03 AID-05

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FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9386

INFO DEA WASHDC

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

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PASS US CUSTOMS SERVICE

PARIS FOR DEA

ROME FOR CUSTOMS

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SNAR TS

SUBJECT: VISIT OF US CUSTOMS OFFICER KEENAN

REF: STATE 109761, 118510

1. EMBASSY AND GOT OFFICIALS VERY SATISFIED WITH RECENT VISIT OF US CUSTOMS SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE KEENAN. KEENAN HAD DISCUSSIONS IN CONJUNCTION WITH EMBOFFS WITH OFFICIALS OF TUNISIAN CUSTOMS SERVICE, AS WELL AS WITH NARCOTICS CONTROL UNIT OF TUNISIAN POLICE.

2. TUNISIAN CUSTOMS SERVICE EXPRESSED INTEREST IN PARTICIPATING IN ALL THREE LEVELS OF US CUSTOMS SERVICE TRAINING PROGRAM. DIRECTOR GENERAL OF CUSTOMS MBARKA WOULD LIKE VISIT US ON VIP TOUR AFTER END OF SUMMER, ACCOMPANIED BY AN ASSISTANT, AT INVITATION OF US COMMISSIONER OF CUSTOMS. DIRECTOR GENERAL INDICATED
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HE COULD ONLY STAY APPROXIMATELY ONE WEEK IN US BUT

THAT HIS ASSISTANT COULD REMAIN FOR MORE DETAILED TECHNICAL DISCUSSIONS. GOT MORE THAN WILLING PROVIDE MIDDLE-LEVEL OFFICIALS FOR MID-MANAGEMENT COURSE GIVEN IN US EITHER ON REGIONAL BASIS OR AS PART OF NON-REGIONAL COURSE WITH TRANSLATION IN FRENCH. EMBASSY NOTES THAT FIVE TUNISIAN PARTICIPANTS IN CURRENT REGIONAL COURSE ARE FROM POLICE JUDICIARE, NOT RPT NOT FROM CUSTOMS SERVICE. PARTICIPATION BY TUNISIAN CUSTOMS PERSONNEL IN SUCH A PROGRAM APPEARS WORTHWHILE.

3. CUSTOMS SERVICE OFFICIALS ALSO ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT PROSPECT OF IN-COUNTRY TRAINING PROGRAM FOR AGENTS AND INSPECTORS, TO BE HELD SOMETIME THIS FALL. IN PARTICULAR, TUNISIANS MOST EAGER OBTAIN NARCOTEST KITS FOR APPROXIMATELY 30 TUNISIAN PORTS OF ENTRY, AND ADEQUATE TRAINING IN THEIR USE.

4. DIRECTOR GENERAL MBARKA MADE CLEAR THAT WHILE NARCOTICS IS AN IMPORTANT FUNCTION OF TUNISIAN CUSTOMS SERVICE, HE WOULD WANT HIS OFFICIALS TRAINED IN OVER-ALL CUSTOMS TECHNIQUES AND NOT EXCLUSIVELY IN NARCOTICS CONTROL. MBARKA STRESSED, FOR EXAMPLE, THE IMPORTANCE TO TUNISIANS OF SOLVING THE PROBLEM OF ILLICIT TRAFFIC IN CURRENCY. PROGRAMS OUTLINED BY KEENAN SEEM APPLICABLE BOTH TO GENERALIZED TUNISIAN CUSTOMS NEEDS AND US ANTI-NARCOTICS INTERESTS. WE THEREFORE MOST GRATIFIED BY FAVORABLE TUNISIAN REACTION TO KEENAN VISIT AND LOOK FORWARD TO JOINTLY BENEFICIAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TWO CUSTOMS SERVICES. EMBASSY WISHES REMIND DEPT AND US CUSTOMS SERVICE THAT ALL PROGRAMS WILL REQUIRE TRANSLATION INTO FRENCH OR ARABIC.

5. ACTION REQUESTED: EMBASSY AWAITS FORMAL INVITATION FROM US CUSTOMS COMMISSIONER TO DIRECTOR GENERAL TUNISIAN CUSTOMS AND FRENCH LANGUAGE COPIES OF PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS FOR MID-MANAGEMENT AND IN-COUNTRY TRAINING PROGRAMS. ON RECEIPT OF LATTER WE WILL TRANSMIT IN-COUNTRY DESCRIPTIONS TO TUNISIAN CUSTOMS VIA MINISTRY OF FINANCE WITH FORMAL INVITATION FOR TUNISIAN PARTICIPATION.

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